



**RCSI**

**University of  
Medicine and  
Health  
Sciences**

# **Peer Review Group Report**

**Human Resources  
July 2021**



**RCSI**



## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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# **1 CONTEXT FOR REVIEW**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This report presents the findings of a quality review of Human Resources at the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, which was undertaken in June 2021.

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) was established by Royal Charter in 1784 to set and support professional standards for surgical training and practice in Ireland. RCSI has evolved considerably in the intervening years and is now both a university and a postgraduate training body in surgery and related specialties. This dual role brings many advantages to the institution, not least of which is the ability to offer education and training at all career levels (i.e. undergraduate, postgraduate & professional) in medicine, surgery and related disciplines. In fact, it is the only surgical or medical Royal College in these islands to have university status. RCSI is the largest medical school in Ireland and awards medical degrees in Ireland, Bahrain and Malaysia. RCSI also provides undergraduate degree programmes in Pharmacy and Physiotherapy in Ireland, undergraduate Nursing degree programmes in Bahrain and masters (taught & by research) and doctoral programmes variously in Ireland, Bahrain, China, Dubai and Malaysia. RCSI became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI) in 1978. Following an institutional review commissioned jointly by the Higher Education Authority and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, RCSI's independent degree awarding powers were activated by ministerial order in 2010 pursuant to the terms of The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (Charters Amendment) Act 2003. The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 established RCSI as a Designated Awarding Body. In 2019 RCSI received authorization to use the description 'University' and to style itself accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019.

RCSI is an independent, not-for-profit health sciences institution with charitable status in the Republic of Ireland. It is currently ranked among the top 250 universities worldwide in the 2021 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. The institution operates a primarily self-funding model, with State funding accounting for less than 20% of total income. The model is based on the education of a substantial cohort of international students alongside Irish/EU students.

## **1.2 Methodology for Review**

### **1.2.1 Purpose of the Review**

The self-assessment exercise is a process by which a Unit reflects on its mission and objectives, and analyses critically the activities it engages in to achieve these objectives. It provides for an evaluation of the Unit's performance of its functions, its services and its administration. In line with the RCSI strategic plan 'Growth and Excellence' it provides assurance to the University of the quality of the units' operations and facilitates a developmental process to effect improvement. The fundamental objectives of the review process are to:

- Monitor the quality of the student experience.
- Identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
- Provide an opportunity for units to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.

- Encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
- Inform the University's strategic planning process.
- Provide an external benchmark on practice.
- Provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality procedures also enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the Universities Act 1997 and the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

### **1.2.2 The Review Process**

The key stages in the internal review process are:

1. Establishment of a Self-Assessment Committee
2. Preparation of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and supporting documentation
3. Site visit by a peer review group that includes external experts both national and international
4. Preparation of a peer review group report that is made public
5. Development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for implementation of the review report's recommendations (that is made public)
6. Follow-up to appraise progress against the QIP

### **1.2.3 Membership of the Peer Review Group**

- Bronwyn Molony, Director of Quality, University College Dublin (Chair)
- Naomi Algeo, PhD Researcher, Trinity College Dublin
- Ann Cumiskey, Senior Financial Accountant, RCSI
- Kevin Empey, Consultant and Managing Director, Work Matters
- Bill Roche, Professor of Industrial Relations & Human Resources, University College Dublin

### **1.2.4 Terms of Reference for the Peer Review Group**

The terms of reference of the PRG are to:

- Evaluate critically the SAR and the supporting documentation
- Verify how well the aims and objectives of the Unit are being fulfilled, having regard to the available resources, and comment on the appropriateness of the Unit's mission, objectives and strategic plan

- Comment on how well the Unit fits with the strategic plans for the University as a whole
- Evaluate the Unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as outlined in the SAR
- Discuss any perceived strengths and weaknesses not identified in the SAR
- Assess the suitability of the working environment(s)
- Comment on any recommendations proposed by the Unit in its SAR
- Make appropriate recommendations for improvement, with due consideration of resource implications

The Peer Review Group visited RCSI remotely from 21 – 25 June 2021 and held meetings with:

- the Head of Unit
- Unit Staff
- RCSI Senior Management Team
- RCSI Senior Leaders/People Managers
- RCSI Recently Recruited Staff
- RCSI Academic and Clinical Staff
- RCSI Research Staff
- RCSI Professional Services Staff
- RCSI Cross sectional staff representatives

A summary of the PRGs commendations and recommendations was provided to the HR Director, HR staff and RCSI QEO Office at the conclusion of the site visit.

The PRG wish to acknowledge and thank the HR Director, the staff of the HR function, RCSI Senior Management and staff from across the University for their engagement in the quality process and meetings during the site visit.



## **2     PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE LAST REVIEW**

The Human Resources Unit provided the PRG with a summary of the recommendations from their last review in 2014 and the progress made to address them. The implementation of the recommendations and enhancement of activity reflects the leadership of the HR Director and the commitment of staff to build the capacity of the Unit, to develop professional support through sharing HR expertise to staff across the University, and the alignment of its activity to support the delivery of RCSI's Strategy. The HR Team has been restructured and provided with additional resources including staff, the Business Partner Model to support Managers and employees has been further developed, and the learning and development portfolio offering has been reviewed and currently delivers over 100 programmes annually via online learning and individual or team supported programmes. Service Level Agreements have been put in place with stakeholders reflecting best practice and work is ongoing to identify automation of routine activity. The team have developed the profile of the Unit across the University through networking and relationship building, Open Days, creating a presence on the University's multiple sites, working with the newly established EDI Unit, and developing an awareness of HR policies and key information through its HR Bulletin publication. Confirmation of the Unit's progress and impact was evidenced in the Self-assessment Report and in feedback from stakeholders during the site visit.

In reviewing the Unit's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the PRG noted a number of recommendations that were marked as 'in progress', 'pending', 'ongoing' and it would advise that the Unit revisit and refresh progress made on some recommendations. In particular, Recommendation 4.12 (Human Resources Department Review Group Report, 2014) which encouraged the Unit to 'reflect on appropriate mechanisms to support the career development of those staff in grades not covered under the academic promotions'. Additional reconsideration is required by the University on providing transparency on reward and career progression pathways. This would enable and support staff retention, recognising their professional expertise, building and retaining institutional knowledge and promotion of RCSI's positive culture and employer of choice. This could be addressed as part of a post-Covid reflection on new ways of working.

It was evident to the PRG that a culture of quality is embedded in the HR function through continuous self-evaluation and enhancement of activity. This have been reflected in the PRG's commendations and recommendations in the various sections of this report.

The PRG wish to acknowledge the additional supports and resources provided by the HR Team to staff during the past 15 months, in particular, the transition to remote and hybrid working. The expertise and institutional knowledge of the team was acknowledged in the staff meetings as the University pivoted to a new way of working while continuing to support its student and staff cohorts across multiple locations/jurisdictions.

### **2.1     Commendations**

- The Review Group commends Human Resources on its progress in implementing recommendations from their last quality review.
- Over the course of the last two reviews, the HR function has been transformed under the current leadership and team. The professionalism and expertise of staff within the Unit is to be commended.
- General acknowledgement across the University that HR support is being delivered including critically during the transition to Covid remote and hybrid working over the last 15 months.

## **2.2 Recommendations**

- There is a need to review career and salary progression for professional staff, including staff occupying specialist research support and management roles. In the light of the widely held view that progress in this critical area significantly lags behind what has been achieved for academic staff. Addressing post-Covid work patterns offers an opportunity to revisit this issue. Greater transparency on reward is required, progression within own area or more broadly within RCSI. Building mobility and expertise through secondments, clear promotion pathways, reward, salary progression.

### 3 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE UNIT

This report presents the findings of a quality review of the Human Resources (HR) function at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), which was undertaken from 21-24<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The purpose of the quality review is to assist RCSI to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and to utilise learnings from this developmental process, to effect enhancements.

Founded as the national training body for surgery in Ireland under Royal Charter, RCSI has been at the forefront of healthcare education since its establishment in 1784. Today RCSI is an independent not-for-profit, world leading, international, health sciences university and research institution, offering education and training at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional level. In December 2019, RCSI was granted independent university status and is currently ranked among the top 250 universities worldwide in the 2021 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. It continues its long-standing affiliation with the National University of Ireland and its medical programmes are accredited by various bodies including Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Irish Medical Council. In 2010, the Charter was changed under Irish legislation to provide for the designation of the College as a statutory degree awarding body.

The HR function at RCSI is led by the HR Director, Mr. Barry Holmes, who sits on the RCSI Senior Management Team (SMT) and reports into the university's CEO/Registrar. The CEO/Registrar reports to the RCSI Council who are the ultimate governing body of the university in accordance with the RCSI Charter.

This is the second internal quality review of the HR department, the first having taken place in September 2014. At the time of the 2014 review, the majority of the HR team was relatively new, with an average tenure of just over 2 years and limited prior experience in the Higher Education sector. The HR Director was also relatively new to his role in RCSI, having been in the position for only 3 years. Since then, the HR function has evolved with additional resources recruited, enabling it to expand the breadth of services being delivered. These services are:

- Recruitment
- Operations
- Business Partnering
- Staff learning and development
- Organisation changes
- Metrics and analytics
- International talent sourcing and engagement

The HR team has grown from 10 individuals in 2014 to 16 in 2021, including 4 staff in HR business partnering roles. Additionally, the Learning and Development team has expanded to include a Learning and Development co-ordinator, while the recruitment team has increased to 3 FTEs with the addition of an International Talent & Sourcing unit.

Another key strategic addition to the HR team since the first internal review, was the introduction of the HR Metrics and Analytics unit, forming a vital strategic focused component of HR service delivery to SMT and the wider RCSI decision makers.

At the time of preparing the SAR, RCSI had over 1,000 staff in Ireland across the Dublin city centre campuses and peripheral hospitals and sites (Beaumont Hospital, James Connolly Memorial Hospital, Rotunda Hospital, Institute of Leadership Sandyford, Waterford General Hospital and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda). Almost half of all staff are categorised under Professional Services, with a quarter in Research.

In addition to its permanent office at 121 St. Stephen's Green, the HR function also have a weekly presence at the ERC, Beaumont and IOL Sandyford. However, since the onset of the global pandemic, all staff have been successfully working remotely.

Within the HR function, there is a strong benchmarking culture whereby insight into trends and best practice exemplified in other organisations, peer Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and otherwise are gathered continuously. It was noted by the Peer Review Group, the best in class work practices within the function, equalling or bettering those of the equivalent function within peer organisations.

There is also an enthusiasm for networking and knowledge exchange with several team members participating in various forums and industry governance boards.

### **3.1 Commendations**

- The PRG commends the introduction of the HR Metrics and Analytics unit.

## **4 PLANNING, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The HR function in RCSI has been transformed over the period covered by this review and the previous quality review. Senior stakeholders attested to the strategic influence and significance of the HR function, consistent with the position presented in the Self-Assessment Report. This extended to the contribution of HR in planning for service delivery during remote working and in facilitating new work processes.

A more proactive role for HR in business planning in departments and professional units would further support line managers and further facilitate overall business planning in RCSI.

Stakeholders at multiple levels view HR Partners as highly effective, though under considerable pressure of work.

All stakeholders stressed the urgency and strategic significance of the senior management team in RCSI working in partnership with HR to develop a set of principles and guidelines to guide the return to post-Covid working and beyond this to guide longer-term work practices to support service delivery. While in the main stakeholders supported a hybrid work model, it was recognized that some roles would need to be delivered in the workplace and others may permit remote working.

### **4.1 Commendations**

- The HR function promotes a positive culture in RCSI in support of the University strategy.
- The centrality of the HR function in University governance and University level business planning was very evident in discussions with SMT, stakeholders and the function.
- Leadership of the HR function during Covid was evidenced, as staff at multiple levels felt supported and informed.
- The deep involvement of HR in business continuity planning and related project groups was widely recognised.
- The collaborative approach of the HR function as a team with strong cross-functional relationships across the organisation was commended.
- The Business Partner model was viewed as exemplary and is highly valued by all stakeholders.
- HR expertise is brought to bear through staff engagement in work and project groups outside the HR function.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

- The 'direction of travel' with respect to post-Covid ways of working needs to be articulated in conjunction with SMT underpinned by core values and mission and student-centred service delivery.
- The PRG supports the University's and function's cautious and open approach to post Covid working patterns.
- There is an urgent requirement for the establishment and communication of a framework on post Covid ways of working to guide managers and staff to adapt to new working

arrangements on a fair and transparent basis that responds to the demands on different units and work roles.

- This needs to be accomplished in collaboration across all levels of the organization. Conversations with staff will be important, as well as working with managers, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- Managers will seek scope for flexibility in line with agreed principles and within common guidelines. Changes may be required to job descriptions to facilitate changes in work patterns.
- The communication of a framework on post-Covid ways of working should guide managers and staff to adapt to new working arrangements on a fair and transparent basis that responds to the demands on different units and work roles.
- Competition at a sectoral level for talent will continue to intensify, especially in the context of a projected major expansion of State funding to the health service, and RCSI needs to continue highlighting its distinctive culture to remain an employer of choice.
- HR should identify ways of crystallising the core values, attributes and competencies of RCSI culture, recognising this as an increasingly important means of attracting and retaining talent, motivating staff and providing a differentiated employee experience.
- The HR function should consider an enhanced role in the annual and longer-term business and workforce planning support provided to senior managers of academic departments and professional units of RCSI.
- Plans to consider a rebranding of HR should proceed in the context of the wide current appreciation of the HR brand and positive recognition of the function. Any rebranding might proceed on the basis of alignment with the current values, the people and culture priorities of RCSI and of the function's evolving role in supporting post-Covid ways of working. However, any consideration of a rebrand should be done with caution not to destabilise the brand and reputation that exists.

## **5 FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES**

The Self-Assessment Report outlines the activities of the seven sub-functions within Human Resources. These include HR Recruitment, HR Operations, HR Partnering, Staff Learning & Development, Organisation Change, Metrics & Analytics, and International Talent.

Stakeholders at multiple levels attested to the highly effective role of HR operations in the work of RCSI. The expertise encompassed within the function was evident and HR staff had developed expertise in advising on issues connected with the management of different groups and areas within RCSI. The excellent support provided for recruitment and on-boarding was recognised, as was the wide suite of Learning and Development modules and associated supports. Examples of best practice within the Function included their level of engagement with the strategic decision process, and the HR Partner model.

Echoing comments in the Self-Assessment Report, a range of stakeholders were critical of the limitations of the CoreHR IT system currently in use (to be addressed below under 'Management of Resources').

### **5.1 Commendations**

- The competence and confidence of the HR team in the delivery of HR services, expert advice and operations process delivery is commended.
- Service delivery, supported by exemplary relationship management, business partnership and adaptability of diverse stakeholder requirements were recognised as hallmarks of the HR function.
- The recruitment process and on-boarding experience for staff were viewed very positively, and immerses new staff in RCSI's positive culture.
- Staff appreciated the totality of the learning and development offering.
- The establishment of a data analytics role within the HR function was recognised as pioneering for the sector.
- The streamlining and automating of HR paper-based processes received positive comment.
- The agility and flexibility across and within HR teams, their responsiveness and pooling of resources were demonstrated during the Covid pandemic.
- The capacity of the HR function to customise their advice to the requirements and challenges of different stakeholders was acknowledged by multiple stakeholders.
- The introduction of WorkVivo as an online platform to enable peer-to-peer engagement and enhance communications is to be commended.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

- We endorse the plan by HR to further develop and deploy HR analytics in support of critical managerial decisions.
- Consideration should be given to deploying analytics and engagement survey data to provide feedback on critical HR metrics to action initiatives to address problems and challenges emerging.

- The promotions process for academic staff might be further enhanced by regular advisory sessions aligned with the promotions cycle, providing advice on promotion criteria, procedures and the preparation of applications.
- There is a need for the Training Function to identify new, systematic and innovative ways to support managers, particularly post-COVID, in areas such as targeted training, peer to peer coaching, bite size training.



## 6 MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

The management of resources has been a particularly distinguishing and commendable feature of the review process. As noted in the Self-Assessment Report, the HR team has grown to a level in recent years whereby it is in a position to deliver on the HR operational, business partnering and centre of excellence needs of the RCSI as a modern HR function.

Through a cost-conscious approach assisted by external benchmarking, the function has kept the resourcing levels to an optimum standard. In fact, it was commonly cited during the review by both the HR team and RCSI management (and noted above) that HR was a lean and very 'tight ship' and that resources were stretched in several areas such as in the business partnering area. The fact that many parts of the organisation expressed a desire to see more support available demonstrated the value and quality of service that the function has delivered to its stakeholders.

This support and the flexibility of the HR function in terms of optimum resource deployment has been particularly evident during the Covid crisis. While the ongoing commitment for maintaining a lean function is commendable, we would highlight this as an area to be monitored closely as the function will be called up again in a significant way to support the organisation in transitioning to new ways of working over the coming years.

We also note the need for the function to review its resource requirements in evolving and growing areas of demand such as workforce planning and indeed multi-level business partnering support. The operational model of the HR function is also an area for consideration into the future with different stakeholder groups and segments perhaps requiring different levels of service and support. Further segmentation of the HR service delivery model would need to be supported by enabling technology as it develops over time.

Such evolution of the function towards greater self-service by managers and staff is obviously dependent on a fit for purpose technology solution. This is not likely to be possible from the current HR technology infrastructure which is mainly provided through the Core HR system. As noted above this is an area of consistent negative feedback and concerns for the HR function but also senior stakeholders who are directly impacted by the limitations of the current system (evidenced by feedback on the performance management and leave management workflows). While we understand this area has been reviewed and migrating to a different platform is in itself problematic, we feel this is an area that needs further attention to meet both current and evolving needs for the function, its core processes & workflows and its delivery model for the future.

### 6.1 Commendations

- The HR function is efficient and cost effective, as evidenced by continuous cost reduction and by external benchmarking.
- The creation and maintenance of a professional, highly engaged and fully resourced HR function
- Strong benchmarking standards and approach in the HR function
- Flexible and agile resource model, particularly in optimum deployment of the team in response to the Covid crisis
- The creation of very strong relationships with internal stakeholders – a clear sense that the HR brand in RCSI is as much about the quality way in *how* they do their work with colleagues as *what* services they deliver
- While numbers are relatively tight it is also evident that the quality of expertise and talent in the team is such that it allows the function to 'box above its weight' in the delivery of services to a wide range of stakeholders and needs across RCSI.

## 6.2 Recommendations

- HR should prepare for an immediate set of demands from stakeholders arising from the imminent return to post-Covid working. In addition, HR will play a pivotal role in developing RCSI strategy on sustainable longer-term work practices as the organisation returns to design longer term work practices.
- HR needs to continue developing managerial HR capacity and expertise through leveraging L&D training, including one-to-one and/or peer support. L&D support priorities identified by line managers included change management, dealing with under-performance and conflict resolution
- There is an urgent need to review the resourcing of the highly successful current Business Partner Model. There is a view that business partners are seriously stretched in their current roles and this dimension of the HR model may need additional resourcing. The review might also encompass added roles for business partners or other HR roles in such areas as Workforce planning as a core element of business planning in conjunction with department and unit senior managers.
- There is a need to formalise mentorship within academic departments and professional units, possibly in the context of the PDP programme.
- An opportunity for HR to refresh the PDP programme model in a post-Covid environment.
- In the light of the various recommendations presented in respect of the current HR model we recommend a review of the configuration of the model, taking account of emerging post-Covid work practices and the diverse levels of required stakeholder supports.
- While ongoing considerations has been given to the problems arising with Core HR, we recommend a further review of the platform in the light of the multiple defects and short comings drawn to our attention by a variety of stakeholders. These problems will likely seriously constrain HR's capacity to deploy more advanced user and manager self-service and application of HR analytics to support management decision-making.
- We recommend that in the first instance HR might consider a sectoral approach to the vendor, involving other Irish HEIs, with a view to achieving a better service and to addressing current defects with the platform.

## 7 SERVICE USERS AND FEEDBACK

The HR Unit engages with a range of stakeholders across RCSI, and capture feedback and metrics through a number of mechanisms including but not limited to the HR Pulse Survey, New Starter Survey, Learning and Development Course Feedback, and Exit Interviews. Data are also available via the annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Staff Survey.

During the course of this review, the HR Unit were described by stakeholders as *'responsive'*, *'proactive'* and *'really excellent'*, with *'an open-door policy'*. This feedback was evident across all cohorts including the SMT, academic staff and professional staff. This positive feedback aligns with past data collection outlined in the Self-Assessment Report including 92% satisfaction rate that staff would recommend RCSI as a 'good place to work'. In particular, a strength of the HR Unit identified in the Pulse Survey was communication and engagement with stakeholders across the RCSI, since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was evidenced by a 98% satisfaction rate agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement: *'RCSI is communicating effectively with all employees about the Universities actions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic'*. Exit interviews were identified in the Self-Assessment Report as an area of weakness, where approximately 20% of leavers completed the leavers' survey and this may be an area for the Unit to consider how to increase uptake in data collection.

Another mechanism in which key metrics could be obtained is via the Core-HR system. At present, however, this was noted during the review to be labour intensive. If the extraction of data was more efficient, it could be used for prospective decision-making, rather than retrospective decision-making.

The feedback loop is not limited to data collection, but also considers the actioning of feedback as well as the transparent communication of feedback outcomes to all relevant stakeholders. While several feedback mechanisms are used to formally capture staff engagement and feedback related to HR Unit activity, the closing of the feedback loop was not always evident during the review, and there was sometimes a lack of clarity around the accountability of the data collected. This was acknowledged during the review as *'an area we could do better'*. It was recognised during the review that there can be a hesitancy to action feedback which could potentially compromise relationships if negative feedback is acted upon. For example, inconsistency of PDP compliance has been outlined, with no follow up on actioning this. RCSI excels in a number of areas, but it is important to action any areas of weakness to further enhance the operations of the institution.

### 7.1 Commendations

- The collection of a series of data metrics on staff engagement and staff concerns is recognised.

### 7.2 Recommendations

- We recommend that further consideration be given to developing clear pathways for the actioning of issues and problems that emerge through the data collection process and also recognising areas in which RCSI excels.

## **8 SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 Commendations**

- The Review Group commends Human Resources on its progress in implementing recommendations from their last quality review.
- Over the course of the last two reviews, the HR function has been transformed under the current leadership and team. The professionalism and expertise of staff within the Unit is to be commended.
- General acknowledgement across the University that HR support is being delivered including critically during the transition to Covid remote and hybrid working over the last 15 months.
- The PRG commends the introduction of the HR Metrics and Analytics unit.
- The HR function promotes a positive culture in RCSI in support of the University strategy.
- The centrality of the HR function in University governance and University level business planning was very evident in discussions with SMT, stakeholders and the function.
- Leadership of the HR function during Covid was evidenced, as staff at multiple levels felt supported and informed.
- The deep involvement of HR in business continuity planning and related project groups was widely recognised.
- The collaborative approach of the HR function as a team with strong cross-functional relationships across the organisation was commended.
- The Business Partner model was viewed as exemplary and is highly valued by all stakeholders.
- HR expertise is brought to bear through staff engagement in work and project groups outside the HR function.
- The competence and confidence of the HR team in the delivery of HR services, expert advice and operations process delivery is commended.
- Service delivery, supported by exemplary relationship management, business partnership and adaptability of diverse stakeholder requirements were recognised as hallmarks of the HR function.
- The recruitment process and on-boarding experience for staff were viewed very positively, and immerses new staff in RCSI's positive culture.
- Staff appreciated the totality of the learning and development offering.
- The establishment of a data analytics role within the HR function was recognised as pioneering for the sector.
- The streamlining and automating of HR paper-based processes received positive comment.
- The agility and flexibility across and within HR teams, their responsiveness and pooling of resources were demonstrated during the Covid pandemic.
- The capacity of the HR function to customise their advice to the requirements and challenges of different stakeholders was acknowledged by multiple stakeholders.
- The introduction of WorkVivo as an online platform to enable peer-to-peer engagement and enhance communications is to be commended.

- The HR function is efficient and cost effective, as evidenced by continuous cost reduction and by external benchmarking.
- The creation and maintenance of a professional, highly engaged and fully resourced HR function
- Strong benchmarking standards and approach in the HR function
- Flexible and agile resource model, particularly in optimum deployment of the team in response to the Covid crisis
- The creation of very strong relationships with internal stakeholders – a clear sense that the HR brand in RCSI is as much about the quality way in *how* they do their work with colleagues as *what* services they deliver
- While numbers are relatively tight it is also evident that the quality of expertise and talent in the team is such that it allows the function to 'box above its weight' in the delivery of services to a wide range of stakeholders and needs across RCSI.
- The collection of a series of data metrics on staff engagement and staff concerns is recognised.

## 8.2 Recommendations

- There is a need to review career and salary progression for professional staff, including staff occupying specialist research support and management roles. In the light of the widely held view that progress in this critical area significantly lags behind what has been achieved for academic staff. Addressing post-Covid work patterns offers an opportunity to revisit this issue. Greater transparency on reward is required, progression within own area or more broadly within RCSI. Building mobility and expertise through secondments, clear promotion pathways, reward, salary progression.
- The 'direction of travel' with respect to post-Covid ways of working needs to be articulated in conjunction with SMT underpinned by core values and mission and student-centred service delivery.
- The PRG supports the University's and function's cautious and open approach to post Covid working patterns.
- There is an urgent requirement for the establishment and communication of a framework on post Covid ways of working to guide managers and staff to adapt to new working arrangements on a fair and transparent basis that responds to the demands on different units and work roles.
- This needs to be accomplished in collaboration across all levels of the organization. Conversations with staff will be important, as well as working with managers, ensuring fairness and transparency.
- Managers will seek scope for flexibility in line with agreed principles and within common guidelines. Changes may be required to job descriptions to facilitate changes in work patterns.
- The communication of a framework on post-Covid ways of working should guide managers and staff to adapt to new working arrangements on a fair and transparent basis that responds to the demands on different units and work roles.
- Competition at a sectoral level for talent will continue to intensify, especially in the context of a projected major expansion of State funding to the health service, and RCSI needs to continue highlighting its distinctive culture to remain an employer of choice.

- HR should identify ways of crystallising the core values, attributes and competencies of RCSI culture, recognising this as an increasingly important means of attracting and retaining talent, motivating staff and providing a differentiated employee experience.
- The HR function should consider an enhanced role in the annual and longer-term business and workforce planning support provided to senior managers of academic departments and professional units of RCSI.
- Plans to consider a rebranding of HR should proceed in the context of the wide current appreciation of the HR brand and positive recognition of the function. Any rebranding might proceed on the basis of alignment with the current values, the people and culture priorities of RCSI and of the function's evolving role in supporting post-Covid ways of working. However, any consideration of a rebrand should be done with caution not to destabilise the brand and reputation that exists.
- We endorse the plan by HR to further develop and deploy HR analytics in support of critical managerial decisions.
- Consideration should be given to deploying analytics and engagement survey data to provide feedback on critical HR metrics to action initiatives to address problems and challenges emerging.
- The promotions process for academic staff might be further enhanced by regular advisory sessions aligned with the promotions cycle, providing advice on promotion criteria, procedures and the preparation of applications.
- There is a need for the Training Function to identify new, systematic and innovative ways to support managers, particularly post-COVID, in areas such as targeted training, peer to peer coaching, bite size training.
- HR should prepare for an immediate set of demands from stakeholders arising from the imminent return to post-Covid working. In addition, HR will play a pivotal role in developing RCSI strategy on sustainable longer-term work practices as the organisation returns to design longer term work practices.
- HR needs to continue developing managerial HR capacity and expertise through leveraging L&D training, including one-to-one and/or peer support. L&D support priorities identified by line managers included change management, dealing with under-performance and conflict resolution.
- There is an urgent need to review the resourcing of the highly successful current Business Partner Model. There is a view that business partners are seriously stretched in their current roles and this dimension of the HR model may need additional resourcing. The review might also encompass added roles for business partners or other HR roles in such areas as Workforce planning as a core element of business planning in conjunction with department and unit senior managers.
- There is a need to formalise mentorship within academic departments and professional units, possibly in the context of the PDP programme.
- An opportunity for HR to refresh the PDP programme model in a post-Covid environment.
- In the light of the various recommendations presented in respect of the current HR model we recommend a review of the configuration of the model, taking account of emerging post-Covid work practices and the diverse levels of required stakeholder supports.
- While ongoing considerations has been given to the problems arising with Core-HR, we recommend a further review of the platform in the light of the multiple defects and short comings drawn to our attention by a variety of stakeholders. These problems will likely seriously constrain HR's capacity to deploy more advanced user and manager self-service and application of HR analytics to support management decision-making.

- We recommend that in the first instance HR might consider a sectoral approach to the vendor, involving other Irish HEIs, with a view to achieving a better service and to addressing current defects with the platform.
- We recommend that further consideration be given to developing clear pathways for the actioning of issues and problems that emerge through the data collection process and also recognising areas in which RCSI excels.

## APPENDIX 1: SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

### IN ADVANCE | Week before virtual site visit | Friday 18 June 2021

Date	Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
	14.00-14.45	45 mins	1	<b>Welcome and Introduction for PRG; Housekeeping and guidance for virtual review</b> Director of Quality & Quality Reviews Manager
	14.45 – 15.00	15 mins	2	Break
	15.00 – 16.30	90 mins	3	<b>Private Planning Meeting for PRG</b> Allow 10 minute break during meeting

### WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 1 | Monday 21 June 2021

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
09.00 – 09.30	30 mins	4	PRG: Review of preparatory work
09.45 – 10.45	60 mins	5	<b>Meeting with Head of Unit, Head of Organisation Change and Head of Staff Learning and Development</b> Meeting Theme: Current strategic approach; challenges; and future direction.
10.45 – 11.10	25 mins	6	Break for PRG
11.10 – 12.00	50 mins	7	<b>Time allocated for meeting unit staff (group 1)</b> Meeting Theme: Working environment; career development and opportunities; collaboration and support; challenges and future potential.
12.15 – 13.05	50 mins	8	<b>Time allocated for meeting unit staff (group 2)</b> Meeting Theme: Working environment; career development and opportunities; collaboration and support; challenges and future potential.
13.05 – 13.45	40 mins	9	Break for PRG
13.45 – 14.30	45 mins	10	<b>Review defined meeting RCSI SMT</b> Meeting Theme: Alignment with current strategy and future directions; future of HR brand; management of resources.
14.30 – 15.15	45 mins	11	PRG Review of afternoon's meetings; draft commendations & recommendations; planning for next day



## WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 2 | Tuesday 22 June 2021

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
09.00 – 09.30	30 mins	12	PRG: Review of preparatory work
09.30 – 10.30	60 mins	13	<b>Review defined meeting Senior leaders/ People Managers 1</b> Meeting Theme: 5 Key areas; current supports and resources provided; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.
10.45 – 11.30	45 mins	14	<b>Review defined meeting New Hires</b> Meeting Theme: HR support and awareness, onboarding; working environment; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.
11.30 – 12.00	30 mins	15	Break for PRG
12.15 – 13.00	45 mins	16	<b>Review defined meeting Academic/clinical teaching staff</b> Meeting Theme: 5 Key areas; HR support and awareness, needs and expectations for teaching staff; relationships; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.
13.00 – 13.45	45 mins	17	Break for PRG
13.45 – 14.30	45 mins	18	<b>Review defined meeting Research staff</b> Meeting Theme: 5 Key areas; HR support and awareness, needs and expectations for research staff; relationships; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.
14.30 – 15.00	30 mins	29	PRG Review of afternoon's meetings; draft commendations & recommendations; planning for next day

## WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 3 | Wednesday 23 June 2021

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
09.00 – 09.30	30 mins	20	PRG: Review of preparatory work
09.30 – 10.15	45 mins	21	<b>Review defined meeting Prof services staff</b> Meeting Theme: 5 Key areas; HR support and awareness, needs and expectations for professional service staff; relationships; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.
<b>15 minute break between meetings</b>			
10.30 – 11.30	60 mins	22	<b>Review defined meeting Senior leaders/ People Managers 2</b> Meeting Theme: 5 Key areas; current supports and resources provided; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.

<b>11.30 – 11.50</b>	20 mins	23	Break for PRG
<b>11.50 – 12.35</b>	45 mins	24	<b>Review defined meeting with cross sectional staff representative group</b> Meeting Theme: 5 Key areas; HR support and awareness, needs and expectations for staff; relationships; success inhibitors/enablers; and recommendations.
<b>12.45 – 13.30</b>	45 mins	25	PRG meeting to draft commendations and recommendations.

#### WEEK OF VIRTUAL SITE VISIT | Day 4 | Thursday 24 June 2021

Time	Dur. Mins	Mtg. No.	Mtg. Title
09.00 – 11.00	120 mins	26	PRG meeting to finalise commendations and recommendations.
11.00 – 11.30	30 mins	27	Break for PRG
11.30 – 12.00	30 mins	28	<b>PRG meeting with QEO for clarification and discussion of main findings</b>
12.00 – 12.30	30 mins	29	<b>Meeting with Head of Unit &amp; QEO to present main findings</b>
12.40 – 13.00	20 mins	30	<b>Closing presentation to all Unit staff</b>
13.00			Review Ends





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# Internal Quality Review

## Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

Human Resources Department

March 2022

# Quality Improvement Plan

## HR Department

### March 2022

#### DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Name of Unit	Human Resources Department					
Project Title	Internal Quality Review					
Document Title	Quality Improvement Plan					
This Document Comprises	DCS	TOC	Text	List of Tables	List of Figures	No. of Appendices
	1					

Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Office of Origin	Issue Date
Rev 1	Draft	Various HR members	Barry Holmes	Anne Weadick		
Rev 1	Final	HR	HR, QEO, SMT, QC	HR, SMT	HR	5 Oct 2022



## Human Resources



### Quality Improvement Plan March 2022

Recommendation order from Panel Review Group	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
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<b>Career Path for Professional Services Staff</b>							
<p>“There is a need to review career and salary progression for professional staff, including staff occupying specialist research support and management roles. In the light of the widely held view that progress in this critical area significantly lags behind what has been achieved for academic staff. Addressing post-Covid work patterns offers an opportunity to revisit this issue.</p> <p>Greater transparency on reward is required, progression within own area or more broadly within RCSI. Building mobility and expertise through secondments, clear</p>	8.2.1	<p>The MI manager is leading a piece of work to align each role to a Level (1-8), this will improve the annual benchmarking process.</p> <p>Detailed assessment of progression patterns of professional service staff is required to ascertain trends and patterns, as it is known that there is a level of progression already in place to fill vacancies. Once this assessment is complete, a review of professional services progression will be possible. However, a likely outcome will be the need for transparent communication with staff that the progression pathway for professional services staff will not align to that for Academic staff, that a fixed promotions or regrading process will not be possible for</p>	<p>HR Director MI Manger HR Partner Team Head of Org Change</p>	n/a	Q4 2022	Practice/approach with respect to professional services progression agreed and communicated	In progress

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promotion pathways, reward, salary progression."		<p>non-academic staff. Working with professional services staff leaders, we will explore other ways to highlight new &amp; vacant roles to professional services staff using existing fora.</p> <p>RCSI has recently agreed a three-year collective pay agreement with trade union partners since the PRG report. This has been communicated to colleagues and the impact this will have on annual compensation reward levels.</p> <p>HR will review potential to look at facilitating secondments for professional services staff.</p>					
<b>Post-Covid Ways of Working</b>							
"The 'direction of travel' with respect to post-Covid ways of working needs to be articulated in conjunction with SMT underpinned by core values and mission and	8.2.2	A draft Hybrid Working Policy is in progress and has had an initial discussed with SMT. This will evolve through further engagement with senior leaders group (SLG), SMT and all staff. Key in the	HR Director Head of Org Change Head of L&D	n/a	Q3 2022	<p>Hybrid policy in place summer 2022</p> <p>Team agreements in place re operation of hybrid working in</p>	In progress

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student-centred service delivery.”		<p>formulation of this policy will be the need to establish trust based guiding principles that are underpinned by the values of a positive organisation. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Flexibility</li> <li>-Trust</li> <li>-Role suitability</li> <li>-Connection</li> <li>-University and student need</li> </ul> <p>This final policy will be formalised and published in full later this year based on these inputs and will encompass pending legislation and ensure compliance with same.</p>				<p>teams Q2 2022.</p> <p>Engagement surveys and lead/lag metrics (e.g. attrition) to measure sentiment and effectiveness</p>	
“The PRG supports the University’s and function’s cautious and open approach to post Covid working patterns.”	8.2.3	In line with our ethos of fostering a positive working culture, we will continue to approach adjustment to post Covid opening and working patterns in a gradual, collaborative way. Guided by public health and an understanding of employee’s	HR Director	n/a	Q1 2022	Updated Campus Safety protocol in place	In place

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Recommendation order from Panel Review Group	SAR Reference PRGR reference	Response / Action Planned	Responsibility for Action	Resources Implications	Deadline / timeframe	Measurement / Benchmarking	Outcome / Status
		personal circumstances and concerns.					
"There is an urgent requirement for the establishment and communication of a framework on post Covid ways of working to guide managers and staff to adapt to new working arrangements on a fair and transparent basis that responds to the demands on different units and work roles."	8.2.4	Communications to all staff at Townhall on February 9th 2022, outlined the key working principles of RCSI's approach to post Covid working (e.g. hybrid will be part of experience at RCSI, no role is fully remote, role suitability varies, local decisions based on trust- see 8.2.2). We are currently in a phase of consultation and collaboration to inform RCSI's draft Hybrid working policy. A key aspect of this will be to provide manager specific guidance and training aligned to the principles of a positive organisation.	HR Director Head of L&D	n/a	Q3 2022	Hybrid policy in place summer 2022  Manager engagement sessions attendance  Staff engagement/listening sessions attendance and output  Engagement surveys and lead/lag metrics (e.g. attrition) to measure sentiment and effectiveness	In progress
"This needs to be accomplished in collaboration across all levels of the organisation. Conversations with staff will be important, as well as working with managers,	8.2.5	As above, planned workshops, engagement sessions and training sessions at the senior leader group (SLG), a middle manager group (MMG) and all staff levels. These engagements will take place in parallel to the development of the	HR Director Head of L&D Head of Org Change	n/a	Q3 2022	Hybrid policy in place summer 2022  Manager engagement sessions attendance	In Progress



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ensuring fairness and transparency.”		hybrid working policy – this will be a living policy that reflects this consultative and collaborative approach.				Staff engagement/listening sessions attendance and output  Feedback mechanisms in place to garner implementation success	
“Managers will seek scope for flexibility in line with agreed principles and within common guidelines. Changes may be required to job descriptions to facilitate changes in work patterns.”	8.2.6	Empowering local decisions based in trust is one of the core guiding principles for RCSI's hybrid working policy approach, and this has been communicated to staff on February 9 <sup>th</sup> Townhall event. Enabling managers to make and implement local decisions related to hybrid working will form a key part of the proposed training and engagement sessions, and supporting guidance and tools will be provided. RCSI will review the pending legislation and take advice to assess what legal changes may be needed at a contractual and job description	HR Director Head of L&D Head of Org Chang	n/a	Q3 2022	Hybrid policy in place by summer 2022  Team agreements in place re: operation of hybrid working at team level  Manager engagement sessions attendance  Engagement surveys and lead/lag metrics (e.g. attrition) to measure sentiment	In progress

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		level.				and effectiveness	
“The communication of a framework on post-Covid ways of working should guide managers and staff to adapt to new working arrangements on a fair and transparent basis that responds to the demands on different units and work roles.”	8.2.7	<p>As above, RCSI’s Hybrid Working policy will ultimately encompass guiding principles that enables and empowers managers and staff to make local decisions based on trust; that people will do their best work regardless of location. Role suitability will vary and this has been communicated and will be included in the policy.</p> <p>In addition to the HW policy, manager engagement and training will enable fair decision-making. Guidance and support from HR will be provided.</p>	<p>HR Director</p> <p>Head of Org</p> <p>Chang</p> <p>Head of L&amp;D</p>	n/a	Q3 2022	<p>Hybrid policy in place by summer 2022</p> <p>Team agreements in place re: operation of hybrid working at team level</p> <p>Manager training and engagement sessions complete</p> <p>Engagement surveys and lead/lag metrics (e.g. attrition) to measure sentiment and effectiveness</p>	In progress
<b>Talent- Attraction &amp; Retention</b>							
“Competition at a sectoral level for talent will continue to intensify, especially in the context of a projected major expansion of State funding	8.2.8	<p><b>Attraction</b></p> <p>We will continue to develop the RCSI brand and remain an employer of choice, advertising our</p>	Recruitment Team	n/a Leveraging internal expertise to support	2021 Clinical Educators campaign Completed	Insight reports from Marketing and Recruitment Statistics	In progress

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to the health service, and RCSI needs to continue highlighting its distinctive culture to remain an employer of choice.”		<p>holistic approach to the employee experience at RCSI including our positive organisation goals.</p> <p>We plan to collaborate with the RCSI marketing team to develop and communicate external media campaigns to attract the best talent for RCSI for key roles, campaigns agreed to date - 2021 clinical educators campaign, 2022 professional services roles, and research, 2023 StAR and Soochow recruitment campaigns.</p> <p><b>Retention</b></p> <p>We will continue to actively track unplanned employee turnover &amp; use employee exit data to identify key trends. Plans in place to address any issues this data presents.</p>			<p>Q2 2022 for research campaign</p> <p>Q3 2022 for professional services.</p> <p>2023 campaign dependant on the StAR &amp; Soochow launch dates</p>		

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"HR should identify ways of crystallising the core values, attributes and competencies of RCSI culture, recognising this as an increasingly important means of attracting and retaining talent, motivating staff and providing a differentiated employee experience."	8.2.9	<p>We will continue to promote and measure our values and connect staff to our culture. Will plan to do this by bringing the lived experience of RCSI values and culture to life through storytelling from existing RCSI staff members. We plan to explore using the external website to promote these testimonials.</p> <p>We will connect current and prospective staff to our purpose through stories highlighting the impact that our research output and alumni have on health and patient outcomes, connecting all staff to the human impact of our collective work.</p> <p>As referenced above, increased focus on leavers survey and exit interviews as we enter a period of potential rising attrition – we aim to increase uptake of leavers survey.</p>	HR Director HR team MI Analytics Manager L&D Team	n/a	Q3 2022	Engagement surveys including EDI, bespoke positive organisation survey and leavers survey to identify any lead/lag metrics (e.g. attrition) to measure sentiment and effectiveness	In progress

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<b>HR Connection to Business Planning Process</b>							
"The HR function should consider an enhanced role in the annual and longer-term business and workforce planning support provided to senior managers of academic departments and professional units of RCSI."	8.2.10	HR Partners are now attending and actively contributing to annual business planning meetings in their respective areas to offer their support and expertise.	HR Director HR Partner Team	n/a	Q4, Q1 Annually	Continued attendance at annual meetings	In place
<b>HR Re-Brand</b>							
"Plans to consider a rebranding of HR should proceed in the context of the wide current appreciation of the HR brand and positive recognition of the function. Any rebranding might proceed on the basis of alignment with the current values, the people and culture priorities of RCSI and of the function's evolving	8.2.11	We will not be changing the department name but continue to develop our service proposition.	No action required	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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role in supporting post-Covid ways of working. However, any consideration of a rebrand should be done with caution not to destabilise the brand and reputation that exists.”							
<b>HR Analytics</b>							
“We endorse the plan by HR to further develop and deploy HR analytics in support of critical managerial decisions.”	8.2.12	<p>MI Manager in place and will continue to lead HR’s centre of excellence with respect to analytics and roll out to managers as appropriate.</p> <p>Investment has been made in a new reporting system (Makodata). Rollout of new suite of enhanced reporting capability associated in progress, which will address some limitations with the CoreHR BI reporting capability.</p>	MI Manager HR Operations Head of Org Change	n/a, investment in Makodata approved 2021	In place	Agreed set of reports in place for managers outlining employee metrics and KPIs	In place
“Consideration should be given to deploying analytics and engagement survey data to provide feedback on	8.2.13	Pulse survey data with associated action plans is published quarterly to all staff to “close the loop” with respect to feedback on	HR Director Head of L&D MI Manager	n/a	Q3 2022	“you said, we did” communications in response to all engagement data in	In progress

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critical HR metrics to action initiatives to address problems and challenges emerging.”		<p>engagement data.</p> <p>We will seek to widen this response mechanism to all employee survey data, including EDI surveys which currently sit with the EDI team.</p> <p>Finally HR, together with the Centre for Positive Psychology and Health (CPPH), will roll out a quantitative survey tool to gather actionable feedback related to positive culture in RCSI.</p>				place	
<b>Academic Promotions</b>							
“The promotions process for academic staff might be further enhanced by regular advisory sessions aligned with the promotions cycle, providing advice on promotion criteria, procedures and the preparation of applications.”	8.2.14	These advisory sessions currently take place, however we will increase the number of promotions advisory sessions and schedule earlier in the year to give further opportunities to engage. A reminder of supports available will be included on the academic promotions form and more broadly advertised – advisory sessions and 1:1 supports.	HR Partner Team	n/a	Q4 2022	<p>Numbers of sessions held</p> <p>Attendance at advisory sessions</p> <p>Track take up of 1:1 supports</p>	In progress

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<b>Manager &amp; Employee Supports</b>							
“There is a need for the Training Function to identify new, systematic and innovative ways to support managers, particularly post-COVID, in areas such as targeted training, peer to peer coaching, bite size training.”	8.2.15	<p>We will pilot a manager peer-to peer-coaching programme to build practical coaching skills in managers and enable them to learn from and support each other.</p> <p>We will start a quarterly Induction programme which new managers will be required to attend to ensure they are familiar with core aspects and responsibilities of their role.</p> <p>We will run targeted training on positive approaches to hybrid leadership and roll out a toolkit for managers with supporting frameworks, templates and conversation guides.</p>	L&D Team HR Partner Team	n/a	Q4 2022	Number of new managers attending quarterly inductions and numbers participating in peer coaching programme.	In progress
“HR should prepare for an immediate set of demands from stakeholders arising from the imminent return to	8.2.16	Since the full reopening of campus (Feb 2022), HR has been working closely with each department to help guide and understand the ‘on	HR Director Head of Org Change Head of L&D	n/a	Q3 2022	Engagement surveys and lead/lag metrics (e.g. attrition) to measure sentiment	In progress



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post-Covid working. In addition, HR will play a pivotal role in developing RCSI strategy on sustainable longer-term work practices as the organisation returns to design longer-term work practices.”		<p>the ground’ experience regarding Hybrid Working practice.</p> <p>As stated above, RCSI communications to staff at Townhall were that all employees are asked to return to campus by end of March to familiarise themselves with campus and that no role is suited for full remote working.</p> <p>A social fund has been made available to each team to encourage departmental get together in a social setting (€30 pp)</p> <p>As outlined above, HR is currently leading a collaborative and consultative piece of work to inform creation of RCSI’s Hybrid Working policy.</p>	HR Partner Team			and effectiveness	
“HR needs to continue developing managerial HR capacity and expertise	8.2.17	These topics are all part of our ‘Managing Through People’ development programme which will	L&D Team HR Partner Team	n/a	Ongoing	Track engagement with managerial supports whether	In progress

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through leveraging L&D training, including one-to-one and/or peer support. L&D support priorities identified by line managers included change management, dealing with under-performance and conflict resolution."		run again in 2022. Standalone learning on these topics is also available through the open programme of L&D short courses and on our LinkedIn Learning library. We will continue to highlight specific recommended courses as part of our weekly microlearning initiative (#focusonskills) as well as providing 1:1 coaching supports through our HR Partners and L&D team. We will look at how we can better promote awareness of these development supports.				classroom based or online	
<b>HR Capacity &amp; Resourcing</b>							
"There is an urgent need to review the resourcing of the highly successful current Business Partner Model. There is a view that business partners are seriously stretched in their current roles and this	8.2.18	Having discussed as a team and with key stakeholders, we do not share the view of the panel although agree there are peaks and troughs in each of the four roles. However we do see and have evidence to date, of how HR Partner "work" can be devolved to	HR Director HR Partner Team HR Team	n/a	Q2 2022 and annually thereafter	Annual Calendar created and broken into quarters to demonstrate the various activities & where staff can get involved.	In progress

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dimension of the HR model may need additional resourcing. The review might also encompass added roles for business partners or other HR roles in such areas as Workforce planning as a core element of business planning in conjunction with department and unit senior managers."		<p>others in the team and plan to further develop this. For example investigations and disciplinary investigations have been and can be assigned outside the HR Partner team.</p> <p>As other opportunities arise, or as we proactively identify other opportunities we will continue to devolve work &amp; create these opportunities for team members.</p>					
<b>Manager &amp; Employee Support</b>							
"There is a need to formalise mentorship within academic departments and professional units, possibly in the context of the PDP programme."	8.2.19	We will continue to build on and expand the 5 formal mentoring programmes already in place for academic and professional support staff.	L&D Team	We need to remain cognisant of institutional capacity to support	Ongoing	Tracking numbers of staff who engage in formal mentoring partnerships	In progress

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managing Through People- Leadership Development Programme</li> <li>-Aurora Women's Leadership Programme</li> <li>-Positive Connections- Early Academic Mentoring Programme</li> <li>-IUA Inter University Mentoring Programme</li> <li>-Research Career Development Framework</li> </ul>		increased mentoring activity.			
<b>PDP</b>							
"An opportunity for HR to refresh the PDP programme model in a post-Covid environment."	8.2.20	<p>At RCSI, we have evolved and matured the PDP process year-ono-year. In 2021, for example, we simplified the question set for the end of year PDP reviews in line with our work on creating a positive organisation.</p> <p>We will include a mandatory people management objective through the online PDP system. This will consistently outline the core areas of responsibility for a people</p>	HR Partner Team	Some development work with CORE HR to autopopulate people management objective	Q4 2022	CORE updated for year end 2022	In progress

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		<p>manager and ensure that this aspect of the role forms part of all PDP conversations.</p> <p>While we are aware that some organisations have chosen to move away from a mid-year/end-of-year performance management cycle in favour of ongoing conversations, we believe that, for now, the objective setting at the start of-year and end of-year annual review model is most appropriate for RCSI.</p>					
<b>HR Delivery Model</b>							
"In the light of the various recommendations presented in respect of the current HR model we recommend a review of the configuration of the model, taking account of emerging post-Covid work practices and the	8.2.21	<p>Needs analysis will be carried out post the PDP deadline and shared with the L&amp;D team to inform plans for which supports are to be put in place.</p> <p>We plan to consolidate resource supports through a new staff portal</p>	All HR units	n/a	Needs analysis- Q2 2022 and Ongoing  HR portal supports	<p>Engagement surveys</p> <p>Usage statistics on new staff portal</p> <p>Numbers of attendance/feedback at HR clinics</p>	In progress

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### Quality Improvement Plan March 2022

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diverse levels of required stakeholder supports.”		and associated communications to allow stakeholders be more self sufficient in accessing the information they need. We will set up a HR Advice drop in clinic to allow quick queries from managers to be talked through e.g. advice on applying a policy.			Q3 2022  HR clinics- Q3 2022		
<b>Core-HR</b>							
“While ongoing considerations has been given to the problems arising with Core-HR, we recommend a further review of the platform in the light of the multiple defects and short comings drawn to our attention by a variety of stakeholders. These problems will likely seriously constrain HR’s capacity to deploy more advanced user and manager self-service and application of HR	8.2.22	We plan to address the underlying causes of the issues raised by stakeholders, rather than undertake a large scale project to review options to replace the CoreHR system.  We will run information gathering sessions with stakeholders to identify additional or unknown issues with the system.  In addition, HR are to address some known system issues: 1.Update information available on use of PDP functionality on an	HR Operation Team Head of Org Change MI Manager HR Partner Team	n/a	Q3 2022	Information gathering and Data validation sessions held and data updated following feedback Updated PDP guidance and enhanced signposting to staff New web based HR administration functionality in place	In progress

## Human Resources



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analytics to support management decision-making."		enhanced HR portal to be rolled out before Q2 2022 and continue to roll out training on this 2. Run data validation and update sessions with key areas to identify proactively rather than reactively where employee reporting line, job title and departmental data requires updating in Core HR. 3.Roll out system enhancement to enable migration from the legacy java based HR administration Core HR platform to fully web based portal functionality. This will improve efficiency and time taken to update employee details					
"We recommend that in the first instance HR might consider a sectoral approach to the vendor, involving other Irish HEIs, with a view to achieving a better service and to addressing current defects with the platform."	8.2.23	HR colleagues are members of a number of sectoral fora 1.HR Director, CIPD leadership, HR Directors forum 2. Head of L&D, member of HEI sector forum 3. Head of Org Change, member of future of work forum	HR Director Head of Org Change	n/a	In place	Continued strengthening of sectoral networks, evidence by regular attendance and participation in multiple fora Continued monthly	In progress

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		<p>4. MI Manager member of sectoral forum focused on data and Athena swan</p> <p>5. HR Operations and Recruitment colleagues member of IBEC forum</p> <p>6. HR Partner, specifically faculty partner strongly networked with HEI sector</p> <p>We have commenced engaging with HRIS peers from all other major HEIs on foot of the contract renewal process, all of whom also use CoreHR. We understand other HEIs are leveraging an outsourced model (Educampus) to represent their needs at a sectoral level and escalate support/service concerns. As RCSI has an outsourced IT helpdesk model we would not pursue a similar approach, however we will continue to leverage the network established with respect to HRIS management.</p> <p>As party of the above, HR is well</p>				engagement with Access UK as part of HEI Ireland sector	



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		<p>informed about sectoral challenges and approaches to CoreHR which is regularly discussed as part of overall HR insights specific to the sector.</p> <p>The CORE HR vendor has recently merged with a larger UK based entity and renamed to Access Group. As such, all HEI clients are grouped within one customer success management function and all are in the process of rolling out functional enhancements (e.g. migration from a legacy back office to portal administration function). Monthly customer success meetings in place.</p>					
<b>HR Analytics</b>							
"We recommend that further consideration be given to developing clear pathways for the actioning of issues and problems that emerge through the data collection	8.2.24	We will continue to communicate results after each Pulse survey to all staff outlining key themes and associated actions through multiple channels.	Director of HR Head of L&D	None	Ongoing	Publication of summary themes and actions after each Pulse survey.	In place

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(this is employee survey) process and also recognising areas in which RCSI excels."		The EDI Team are owners of the annual EDI survey process but we will highlight the need for a similar communication to 'close the feedback loop'.					